

May 2019

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Benefits of Gardening

Gardening has many great health benefits, especially for seniors. Gardening is great for both mental and physical health, while being able to have fresh produce from early Spring to late Fall. Gardening provides exercise with improvements of mobility and flexibility. This exercise incorporates many areas of the body with bending, stooping, and reaching which helps improve and maintain motor skills. Other benefits are: endurance; stress reduction; help with disease prevention and management; and improve mental awareness.

Gardening should not feel like a chore or burden. It should be relaxing and enjoyable. Growing your own produce will ensure you have access to fresh fruits and vegetables and encourage a healthier lifestyle. Gardening will also help keep you active and give you a sense of accomplishment. It is very rewarding to watch plants grow and produce fruits and vegetables.

Please keep in mind while gardening that a senior's skin is thinner and more fragile. Be cautious to avoid cuts and scrapes. It is also important to keep plenty of sunscreen on and reapply often. Be attentive to falls. Always have a walker or cane available (even if it is not necessary on a regular basis). Make sure terrain is safe and free of obstacles to prevent falls.

Make sure you stay hydrated while gardening to prevent overheating and dehydration.

Things to keep in mind for a safe garden:

- Modify the garden for accessibility
 - Raised Beds
 - Small potted plants
 - Lightweight tools
 - Nearby water source
 - Plant in plastic buckets for easier handling
- Have chair/bench available to take rests
- Make sure someone knows you are tending to your garden in case someone is trying to reach you and you are outside

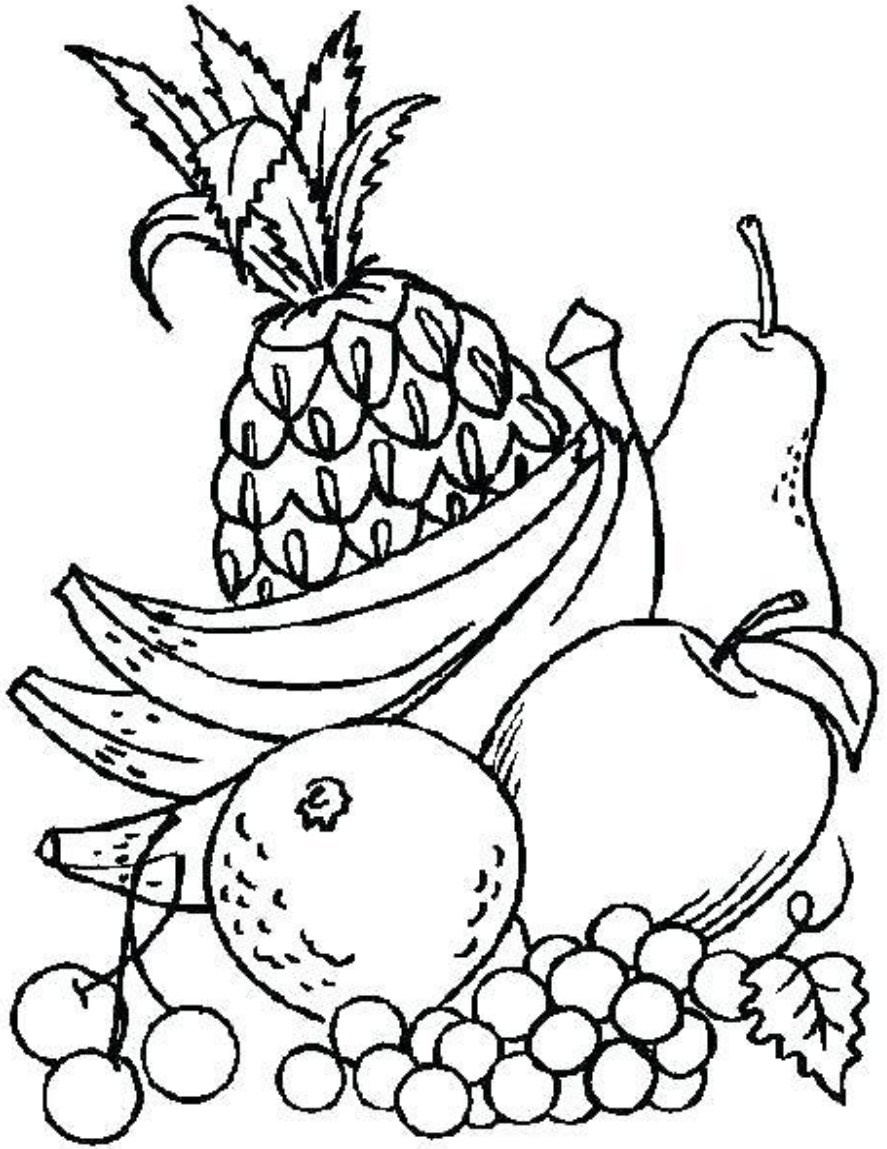


Supplies you need for a porch garden:

- 5-gallon buckets
- Clean dirt
- Small rocks
- Plants of your choice
- Watering can (not too big so it doesn't get too heavy)
- Tool to puncture holes in bottom of the bucket for drainage (if you are uncomfortable with this or do not have the tools to do this, please have a friend or family member to help. This can be done at a later date)

Fill 1/4 of the bucket with the small rocks. Fill the rest of the bucket with the clean dirt. Plant one plant of your choice in the bucket. Place bucket in sunlight area. Water the plant until soil is moist. Do not over water the plant, especially if you do not have a hole in the bottom of the bucket.

Building a raised plant bed is similar to a bucket porch garden. Make sure you have proper drainage and plenty of dirt. If doing a raised plant bed, make sure you do not put plants too close together. Give the plants the opportunity to grow.



References:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=WdHn6Z%2fX&id=CFC4ED5A07983CE9D0DE34328B50A14DFD5AA986&thid=OIP.WdHn6Z_XF-mE8oePvgKMLgHaJx&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fficardo-weddings.com%2fimages%2ffruit-and-vegetable-coloring-pages%2fcoloring-pages-fruits-vegetable-coloring-pages-and-coloring-pages-fruits-and-veggies-coloring-pages-vegetable-garden-colouring-pages-christian-coloring-pages-fruit-of-the-spirit.jpg&exph=643&expw=487&q=adult+Vegetable+and+fruit+coloring&simid=607999962772803165&selectedIndex=233&ajaxhist=0

<http://www.carefecthomecareservices.com/blog/the-benefits-of-gardening-for-seniors>

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<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dail/Pages/nutrition.aspx>